

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE **HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL**

To be held on

23 June 2025

At 5.30pm

In the

Council Chamber, Civic Centre

18 Roberts Avenue, HORSHAM



**COUNCILLORS are respectfully requested to attend the Council Meeting
of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held on 23 June 2025
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm**

Order of Business

PRESENT

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

1. PRAYER

Almighty God, we pledge ourselves to work in harmony for, the social, cultural and economic well-being of our Rural City. Help us to be wise in our deliberations and fair in our actions, so that prosperity and happiness shall be the lot of our people. AMEN

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY STATEMENT

Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

3. OPENING AND WELCOME

Chairman, Cr Ian Ross formally welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. The Mayor advised that the meeting will be recorded to maintain a video archive, which will be available on the Horsham Rural City Council website as soon as practicable.

4. APOLOGIES

5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Recommendation

That the minutes emanating from the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm on 26 May 2025 and 5:32pm on 16 June 2025 be adopted.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken.

Members of Staff

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers or people engaged under contract to the Council providing a report or advice to Council must disclose any conflicts of interests in the matter, including the type of interest.

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<i>Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(a) - Council Business Information and Section 3(1)(g) – Private Commercial Information</i>	

CLOSE


GAIL GATT
Chief Executive Officer

REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

9.1 REVENUE AND RATING PLAN 2025-2029

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Corporate Services
File Number:	F18/A14/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Revenue and Rating Plan 2024-2029 (**Appendix 9.1A**)

Purpose

To adopt the Horsham Rural City Council Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.

Summary

- The Draft Revenue and Rating Plan has been prepared in line with guidance provided by Local Government Victoria
- The Draft Plan was available for public feedback via Council's *Have Your Say* website
- The Draft Plan incorporates changes to the differential rating system raised in prior community consultations
- Minor wording adjustments have been incorporated into the Draft Revenue and Rating Plan based on feedback received.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the Horsham Rural City Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 (**Appendix 9.1A**).

REPORT

Background

Council is required under Section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020* to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan by 30 June following a general election for a period of at least the next 4 financial years. Council has prepared the Plan and provided the Plan for community feedback via the Have Your Say function on Council's website. The Plan is now presented for adoption.

The purpose of this 2025-2029 Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for Horsham Rural City Council which, in conjunction with other income sources, will adequately finance the objectives of the Council Plan.

Discussion

The Revenue and Rating Plan explains how Council will calculate the revenue needed to fund its activities, and how the funding contributions will be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services for the period 2025-2029.

It sets out principles and policy positions that Council has adopted in relation to rating options available to it under the *Local Government Act 2020* to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners. The Plan also sets out the principles Council has adopted for other revenue sources such as fees and charges.

It is important to note that this Plan does not set revenue targets for Council, rather it outlines the strategic framework and decisions that Council have made in relation to the calculation and collection of its revenue. Decisions around revenue targets are set out in Council's Budget and long-term financial planning documents.

Rates are the most significant revenue source for Council and comprised 51% of annual income in 2023-24. It should be noted that this percentage fluctuates in accordance with changes to the level of grant funding received in any given year.

The approach to differential rating has been explored in the document in detail, with this version of the Plan adopting a modified approach. Council has previously set the rate in the dollar, applying a different rate to some property types based on a percentage of the residential rate. In the 2024-2025 financial year Residential, Commercial and Industrial properties combined paid a general rate in the dollar which amounted to 67% of total rate revenue whilst the farming properties paid a general rate of 50% of the residential rate in the dollar which amounted to 33% of total rate revenue. As general rates are calculated by multiplying the Capital Improved Value of the property by the Rate in the dollar, these contribution percentages fluctuate from year to year.

The new Plan provides for a floating differential which means that regardless of the movement of the valuations, the Residential, Commercial and Industrial properties combined will continue to pay 67% of total rate revenue whilst the farming properties will contribute 33% of total rate revenue.

Maintaining service delivery levels and investing in community assets remain key priorities for Council however the introduction of rate capping under the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) has brought a renewed focus to Council's long-term financial sustainability. The FGRS continues to restrict

Council's ability to raise revenue above the rate cap unless an application is made to the Essential Services Commission.

Council provides a wide range of services to the community, often for a fee or charge. The nature of these fees and charges are largely dependent on whether they relate to statutory or discretionary services. Some fees, such as statutory planning fees, are set by State Government statute and are commonly known as regulatory fees with councils usually having no control over service pricing. For non-statutory services Council can set a fee or charge in accordance with the principles outlined in this Revenue and Rating Plan. This document is supported by a detailed Register of Fees and Charges each financial year.

Council's revenue can also be adversely affected by changes to funding from other levels of government. While some grants are tied to the delivery of council services, many are tied directly to the delivery of new community assets, such as roads or sports pavilions. Notably there is a significant untied grant from the Federal Government's Financial Assistance Grant (FAGS) program which is provided to councils by the Victorian Grants Commission, under a complex formula to address fiscal imbalances between councils. It is therefore important for Council to be clear about the grants it intends to apply for, and the obligations that such grants create in the delivery of services or infrastructure.

Options to Consider

The Revenue and Rating Plan is a key document for the good governance and operations of Council noting it is the role of a council to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community. To adhere to this good governance, Councils must prepare and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan for a period of at least the next four financial years following a general election.

The Revenue and Rating Plan must be adopted by 30 June following a general election (the last general election being November 2024). If Council has not adopted the Plan by that date, it would be in breach of the legislation.

The Plan is therefore presented for adoption by Councillors to provide good governance in the HRCC municipality for the benefit and wellbeing of the HRCC community.

Sustainability Implications

Rate capping continues to place restrictions on Council's ability to raise its own source income and places an ever-increasing reliance on grants from other tiers of government, the availability of which can change over time. Council's share of the overall tax revenues of all tiers of government (approximately 3%) is also a factor as additional responsibilities and obligations are being given to council without adequate consideration of the taxation implications. These issues mean that Council must be mindful of its own financial sustainability and therefore take a more conservative approach to debt than other levels of government and/or the private sector may take.

Community Engagement

The draft Revenue and Rating Plan was made available on Council's website and was accompanied by a survey to try and engage with the community and encourage feedback of a quantitative and qualitative nature. Only two responses were received in relation to the Plan and this feedback has been provided to Councillors to consider if any amendment is required to the Plan.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

During drafting of the Revenue and Rating Plan, Councillors workshopped various models of differential rating. Many scenarios were completed and included detailing of how each class or type of ratepayer would be impacted. This practice has seen Council pose a change to the differential rating method while recognising it must continue to explore options to improve rating systems and continually review the impacts of the various options on different ratepayers.

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Implications

All matters under consideration impact the financial framework of HRCC.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Fair Go Rates System

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 is an integral part of the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework. It assists to provide direction on how Council will fund activities and initiatives set out in the Community Vision 2041, the 2021-2025 Council Plan and the 2025-2029 Council Plan currently being prepared.

Risk Implications

A Council, must in the performance of its role, give effect to the overarching governance principles including that the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured (s9(2)(g)). In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account a number of supporting principles—including the financial management principles (s9(3)(d) *Local Government Act 2020*).

Conclusion

The Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and other guidance provided by Local Government Victoria. In preparing the Plan, Council has considered the current financial environment and other factors including the reasons for the retention of differential rating albeit under a revised model of distribution with the express intention of maintaining a status quo contribution method for the next four years to that in the 2024-2025 financial year to provide a reasonable level of consistency to ratepayers.

9.2 FEES AND CHARGES 2025-2026

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Corporate Services
File Number:	F18/A14/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Horsham Rural City Council Register of Fees and Charges 2025-2026 (**Appendix 9.2A**)

Purpose

To present the Horsham Rural City Council Register of Fees and Charges 2025-2026 for adoption.

Summary

- It is considered best practice and good governance to set user fees and charges as part of the budget process.
- The fees and charges that will be charged in respect to various goods and services during the 2025-2026 financial year are provided for adoption.
- The document presented includes both statutory and non-statutory fees and charges as well as GST applicability.
- The fees and charges provided are based on information available at the time of publishing and may vary during the financial year subject to any changes in legislation or Council policy.
- Council may update the Register by returning individual schedules to Council for revision throughout the year.
- The Register promotes openness and transparency to the community around the prices of services and the rationale behind increases.

Recommendation

That Council adopt Horsham Rural City Council Register of Fees and Charges for 2025-2026 (**Appendix 9.2A**).

REPORT

Background

The disclosure of fees and charges to be levied for various goods and services provided during the year is optional and not required by legislation. It is, however, considered best practice and good governance to consider the setting of user fees and charges as part of the budget process. The process also promotes transparency to the community around the pricing of services provided to them.

Discussion

This is the second year Council has presented the Register of Fees and Charges as a separate document to enable the document to be updated with information and/or fee changes throughout the year. Prior to this process, fees and charges were a schedule included as part of the budget document and only updated once per year.

It should be noted that some external factors have impacted Council's ability to maintain minimum fee increases, such as, but no limited to:

- Environment Protection Authority Waste Levies continue to increase impacting Transfer Station and Landfill charges,
- Green waste continues to be very costly to process,
- Costs to administer permits continue to escalate.

There are some fees in the Waste Management area that have decreased. This has been a conscious decision to encourage ratepayers to take items to the transfer station and therefore combat illegal dumping which is extremely costly to remedy. The fee for disposing of e-waste has also been removed this year.

The Register of Fees and Charges for 2025-2026 is presented for adoption.

Options to Consider

Council has the option not to disclose fees and charges they intend to levy for various goods and services. Even though the information is not required by legislation, the provision of such information is considered best practice and good governance. It is therefore recommended that Council adopt the Register presented and disclose the fees and charges.

Sustainability Implications

There are statutory fees and other charges that Council must apply. Council also sets fees and charges that are non-statutory in nature and represent user fees. The fees and charges register identifies which fees are statutory and those which are non-statutory, GST applicability and provides explanation for any variance greater than 10% from previous years.

Council sets out the rationale for the pricing of services in its adopted Revenue and Rating Plan which cites the following basis for the setting of fees and charges:

1. Market Price – where Council sets prices based on the benchmarked competitive prices of alternate suppliers. Market prices will be used when other providers exist in the given market and Council needs to meet its obligations under the government's Competitive Neutrality Policy.
2. Full Cost Recovery – where Council aims to recover all direct and indirect costs incurred by Council. This pricing is used where a service benefits individual customers specifically.

3. Subsidised Price – where Council may receive alternative revenue to offset the cost or service or provides the service to the customer with a reduced price to promote inclusiveness or some other intangible benefit.

Community Engagement

The draft Register of Fees & Charges was made available on Council's *Have Your Say* website. The Register was accompanied by a survey to try and engage with the community and encourage feedback of a quantitative and qualitative nature. Only two responses were received on the Register. This feedback has been provided to Councillors to consider if any amendment is required to the Register.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The formatting of the Register enables Council to update the document outside the budget process, if necessary, such as where a legislative change impacts fee amounts. This approach demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

The fees and charges directly affect the 2025-2026 Budget as they represent both statutory and user fees. On that basis they represent a form of revenue within the budget.

Council's methodology for fees and charges pricing is set out in the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The fees and charges have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Better Practice Guide which accompanies the Local Government Model Budget provided by Local Government Victoria. Relevant statutory charges set by other levels of government and collected by Council have been included in the Register to assist the community in navigating this complex area.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The fees and charges have been prepared with reference to previous years' charges and in line with key Council documentation such as Community Vision 2041, the 2021-2025 Council Plan, and Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.

Risk Implications

While there is no legislative requirement to disclose fees and charges it is considered best practice to do so. Adopting best practice principles helps to reduce risk to Council and ensures we are being transparent in the application of such fees.

Conclusion

The 2025-2026 Register of Fees and Charges, both statutory and non-statutory, has been prepared as part of the budget development. The Register is presented to Council for adoption in advance of the formal adoption of the Budget 2025-2026 noting the fees and charges outlined in the Register have been incorporated into the revenue calculations for the 2025-2026 Budget.

9.3 BUDGET 2025-2026

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Corporate Services
File Number:	F18/A10/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Horsham Rural City Council Budget 2025-2026 (**Appendix 9.3A**)

Purpose

To present the Horsham Rural City Council Budget 2025-2026 for adoption.

Summary

- The Budget 2025-2026 is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- The Budget 2025-2026 has been prepared through a process of consultation and discussion with Councillors and Council Officers.
- The Budget 2025-2026 aligns with objectives set out in the 2021-2025 Council Plan

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopt Horsham Rural City Council Budget 2025-2026 and the subsequent 3 financial years, as attached pursuant to Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
2. Declare the following rates and charges for the 2025-2026 financial year:
 - Amount Intended to be raised:
An amount of \$33.687m (or such other amount as is lawfully raised as a consequence of this resolution) be declared as the amount which Council intends to raise by general rates and the annual service charge, which is calculated as follows:

General Rates	\$27.199m
Municipal Charge	\$ 2.305m
Waste Management Charge	\$ 5.037m
Interest on Rates	\$ 0.040m and
Revenue in lieu of rates	\$ 0.306m
3. Rates Information:
 - General Rates - A general rate be declared in respect of the 2025-2026 rating year, being the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.
4. Declare that the general rate be raised by the application of differential rates for rateable land having the respective characteristics specified in 4.1.1(n) of the budget document.

5. Each differential rate will be determined by multiplying the Capital Improved Value of each rateable land by the relevant rate in the dollar as indicated as follows:

Residential	\$0.0038340
Commercial	\$0.0038340
Industrial	\$0.0038340
Cultural and Recreation	\$0.0019170
Farm	\$0.0020140

6. Municipal Charge - Declare a municipal charge for 2025-2026 of \$200.00 for each rateable land (or part) in respect of which a municipal charge may be levied.
7. Annual Bin Service Charge - Declare an annual service charge for the collection and disposal of refuse in respect of the 2024-2025 Financial Year and set out below:

Urban Bin Charge	\$543.00
Rural Bin Service	\$378.00
Additional General Waste Bin	\$153.00
Additional Recycling Bin	\$153.00
Additional Organics Bin	\$153.00
Additional Glass Bin	\$88.00
Commercial Bin Service (weekly general waste/fortnightly recycling)	\$525.00
Additional/Standalone Commercial General Waste Bin (weekly)	\$328.00
Additional/Standalone Commercial Recycling Bin	\$197.00
Additional Commercial Organics Bin	\$197.00
Additional Commercial Glass Bin	\$99.00

8. Setting of interest rate on unpaid rates and charges

The Council will charge interest for rates and charges which have not been paid by the due dates, as specified under Section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

9. Payment of rates and charges

Declare that a person can pay a rate or charge (other than a special rate or charge) by:
Four (4) instalments which are due and payable on the dates fixed by the Minister by notice published in the Government Gazette; or paid in full on 15 February 2025.

REPORT

Background

This is the final budget that will be prepared under the guidance and influence of the Council Plan 2021-2025. Council has been undertaking community engagement to inform the 2025-2029 Council Plan and reaffirm the direction and aspirations of the Community Vision for Horsham 2041 with the next budget to be prepared under the guidance of the 2025-2029 Plan.

This is also the ninth year of budget preparation under the State Government's Fair Go Rates system with the Rate Cap set at 3.0 per cent by the Minister for Local Government on 23 December 2024. It is against that figure that the 2025-2026 budget has been framed.

Council has a range of both internal and external cost pressures to contend with, however still recognises the need to play an important role as the regional city for the western area of the state providing quality services to more than just our own residents. There continues to be growth and development within the community which puts pressure on service delivery costs such as the supply of parks and gardens, maintenance of roads and footpaths over time.

Discussion

The Budget 2025-2026 has been developed in accordance with the *2025-26 Local Government Model Budget* published each year to assist councils in preparing their budget in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements. Each of the financial statements presented in the budget have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Key Statistics

	2024-25 Budget	2024-25 Forecast	2025-26 Budget
Total Revenue	\$64.946m	\$64.234m	\$67.444m
Total Expenditure	\$63.082m	\$62.220m	\$61.833m
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	\$1.864m	\$2.014m	\$5.611m
Underlying Operating Result – Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$4.550m)	(\$3.021m)	\$0.700m

(Note: Underlying operating result is an important measure of financial sustainability as it excludes income which is to be used for capital, from being allocated to cover operating expenses)

Budget Influences

In preparing the Budget 2025-2026, several internal and external influences have been taken into consideration as they impact significantly on the services delivered by the Council in the budget period and resulting budget position. Further budgetary pressure is felt due to the current inflationary environment, particularly where cost increases of materials and services far exceed the Rate Cap of 3.0 per cent.

Capital Works

The proposed capital works budget is \$20.226 million, made up of \$7.191 million of new projects, \$11.357 million in renewal and \$1.678 million in upgrades. The capital works program will be funded by \$3.342 million of grant funding, \$16.854 million of Council cash from operations, reserves and investments and \$0.030 million of external contributions.

Borrowing

Council is not planning to borrow any funds in the 2025-2026 financial year.

Capex Summary

Whilst a detailed summary of capital works is provided in the document, the following projects are highlights of the program:

- City Oval Netball Clubrooms completion and fit out
- Wimmera Libraries Open Access fit out
- Toilet Upgrade at Firebrace Street
- Horsham Town Hall lighting desk
- Apex (Adventure) Island Eastern Boardwalk Crossing and Fishing Platform
- Further work on developing our various industrial estates (\$2.8m) and
- Over \$7m in road and street works.

Rates and Charges

Council has reviewed the Revenue and Rating Plan for the 2025-2029 period and made changes to the methodology for the calculation of differential rates. Whilst the detail of the change is outlined in the Plan, the purpose of the change was to provide consistency in application of the contribution to total rate revenue by all sectors.

Council has retained its additional 'Council-funded' rebate to pensioners at \$50 which is rebate over and above the state government rebate. The Municipal Charge has also been retained at \$200.

Centralised Annual Valuations

Since 2019, the Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) is the sole valuation authority to conduct annual valuations for rating purposes. The Budget 2025-2026 includes preliminary valuation data from the VGV with valuations as at 1 January 2025. All rating information contained within the budget, including rates in the dollar, is based on these updated valuations. Council has received a "Generally True and Correct" (GTC) assurance from the VGV, however, until the preliminary valuations are certified by the VGV they may be subject to change.

Movements in individual property valuations (CIV) will have an impact on individual rate notices and are difficult to communicate through the Budget 2025-2026 document. Individual property valuation movements will therefore not be advised until the 2025-2026 annual rates notice for each property are distributed.

Targeted Performance Indicators & Initiatives

Section 2 of the Budget 2025-2026 documents Council's current and projected forecast across several prescribed indicators and initiatives. The indicators are useful for analysing Council's financial position and the initiatives are specific non-recurrent projects being undertaken in line with community aspirations.

Amendments to the Draft Budget

Since the preparation of the Draft Budget 2025-2026, Council has been made aware of outcomes of funding applications and other grants. The following table represents a reconciliation of the Income Statement and Capital Works Statements after incorporating these items.

Item	Forecast 2024-25 \$'000	Budget 2025-26 \$'000
<i>Income Statement</i>		
<i>Surplus/(Deficit) as per Draft Budget</i>	3,190	5,922
Additional Operational Grants (FAGS)	-	611
Net Reduction of Capital Grants (RLCIP, City Oval & Various Roads)	(1,176)	(922)
<i>Surplus/(Deficit) as per Revised Draft Budget</i>	2,014	5,611
<i>Cash Flow Statement</i>		
<i>Cash as per Draft Budget</i>	8,776	7,584
Impact of prior year cash		(1,176)*
Additional Operational Grants (FAGS)	-	611*
Net Reduction of Capital Grants (RLCIP, City Oval & Various Roads)	(1,176)*	(922)*
Net Reduction of Capital Works Expenses (City Oval, Wimmera Libraries & O'Callaghans Parade)		3,225
Removal of Loan Proceeds		(2,400)*
<i>Cash as per Revised Draft Budget</i>	7,600	6,922
<i>Balance Sheet</i>		
<i>Net Assets as per Draft Budget</i>	686,162	692,085
<i>Cash – Reduction of Cash as above *</i>	(1,176)*	(3,887)*
<i>Liabilities – Reduction due to no new Loan</i>		2,400
<i>Net Asset as per Revised Draft Budget</i>	684,986	690,598

Options to Consider

The budget is a key document for the good governance and operations of Council noting it is the role of a Council to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community. To adhere to this good governance, Councils must prepare and adopt a budget for each financial year and the subsequent three financial years.

The Council Budget must be adopted by 30 June each year, or any other date fixed by the Minister as per the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The budget is therefore presented for adoption by Councillors to provide good governance in the HRCC municipality for the benefit and wellbeing of the HRCC community.

Sustainability Implications

Rate capping continues to place restrictions on Council's ability to raise its own source income and places an ever-increasing reliance on grants from other tiers of government, the availability of which can change over time. Council's share of the overall tax revenues of all tiers of government (approximately 3%) is also a factor as additional responsibilities and obligations are being given to Council without adequate consideration of the taxation implications. These issues mean that Council must be mindful of its own financial sustainability and therefore take a more conservative approach to debt than the approach other levels of government and/or the private sector may take.

Community Engagement

The draft Budget 2025-2026 was made available on Council's website accompanied by a survey to try and engage with the community and encourage feedback of a quantitative and qualitative nature. Seven responses were received. This feedback has been provided to Councillors to consider if any amendment is required to the Budget.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Council continues to review the format and content of the budget document to ensure alignment with the model documents provided by Local Government Victoria, ensure best practice models are presented and provide the community with a relevant and readable document.

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Implications

All matters under consideration impact the Council Budget 2025-2026.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Fair Go Rates system.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 is an integral part of the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework. It helps provide direction on how Council will fund activities and initiatives set out in the Community Vision 2041, the 2021-2025 Council Plan and the 2025-2029 Council Plan currently being prepared.

Risk Implications

A Council, must in the performance of its role, give effect to the overarching governance principles including that the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured (s9(2)(g)). In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account a number of supporting principles—including the financial management principles (s9(3)(d) Local Government Act 2020).

Council must also ensure that the budget gives effect to the Council Plan and contains financial statements in the form and containing the information required by the regulation; a general description of the services and initiatives to be funded in the budget; major initiatives identified by the Council as priorities in the Council Plan to be undertaken during the financial year; services to be funded in the budget, including prescribed indicators and measures of service performance that are required to be reported against; the total amount Council intends to raise by rates and charges; a statement as to whether the rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or a differential rate; a description of any fixed component of the rates, if applicable; plus any other information prescribed by the regulations. (s94(2) *Local Government Act 2020*).

There is a legislative requirement, specifically s94(1) of the Local Government Act 2020, that the budget be adopted by 30 June each year. There is also requirement, s158 (1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, that Council must declare rates and municipal charges by 30 June each year for the following year.

Conclusion

The Budget 2025-2026 has been developed in accordance with the 2025-26 Local Government Model Budget published each year to assist councils in preparing their budget in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements. The budget is considered fiscally responsible whilst still providing a degree of important economic activity within the municipality. The Budget 2025-2026 is presented for adoption.

9.4 COMMUNITY DONATIONS 2025-2026

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Corporate Services
File Number:	F20/A01/000016

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☒ Yes ☐ No

Reason:

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Community Donations 2025-2026 (**Appendix 9.4A**)

Community Donations Policy (**Appendix 9.4B**)

Councillor Conflict of Interest disclosures (**Appendix 9.4C**)

Purpose

To provide Council with the Community Donations proposed for inclusion in the 2025-2026 budget for endorsement.

Summary

- This report details community donations to the value of \$164,085 that are recommended for inclusion in the 2025-2026 budget.
- Details of each community donation are provided at **Appendix 9.4A**.
- Donations have been allocated in accordance with the Community Donations Policy which was reviewed and approved by Council in January 2025 (**Appendix 9.4B**).

Recommendation

That Council approve Community Donations to the total value of \$164,085 as follows :

1. Approve \$141,665 to the following Community Donations (noting nil Councillor conflicts of interest):

Applicant	Amount
Laharum - Camerons Oval	\$ 13,560
Quantong Recreation Reserve	\$ 13,560
Dock Lake Recreation Reserve	\$ 6,780
Kalkee Recreation Reserve	\$ 6,780
Pimpinio Recreation Reserve	\$ 6,780
Noradjuha Recreation Reserve	\$ 6,780
Brimpaen Recreation Reserve	\$ 575
Clear Lake Recreation Reserve	\$ 575
Dooen Recreation Reserve	\$ 575
Riverside Recreation Reserve	\$ 575
Toolondo Recreation Reserve	\$ 575
Wonwondah Recreation Reserve	\$ 575
Public Halls insurance levy	\$ 20,000
Other Community Facilities insurance levy	\$ 13,400

Rates exemption for cultural, recreational and charitable organisations	\$ 8,510
Federation University - Horsham Campus Nursing Award	\$ 300
Longerenong College (Skill Invest) - Citizenship Award	\$ 300
Holy Trinity Lutheran College - Senior Achievement Award	\$ 200
Horsham College - Senior Achievement Award	\$ 200
St Brigid's College - Senior Achievement Award	\$ 200
Christian Emergency Food Centre	\$ 5,490
Horsham College Chaplaincy (Access Ministries)	\$ 6,275
Horsham Tidy Towns	\$ 6,165
Wimmera Association for Genealogy	\$ 360
Wimmera River Improvement Committee	\$ 9,180
Wimmera River Improvement Committee-Police Paddock	\$ 2,695
Dadswell Bridge Community Newsletter	\$ 300
North West Grampians Newsletter	\$ 1,910
Wonwondah North Hall	\$ 300
Christian Ministers Association	\$ 4,370
Horsham City Pipe Band	\$ 1,910
Horsham Rural City Band	\$ 1,910
Total	\$141,665

2. Approve \$21,220 to the following community grant allocations (noting Councillor conflict of interest):

Applicant	Amount
Natimuk Showgrounds	\$ 13,560
Bennett Road Kindergarten – maintenance support	\$ 960
Green Park Kindergarten – maintenance support	\$ 960
Natimuk Pre-school – maintenance support	\$ 960
Natimuk Road Kindergarten – maintenance support	\$ 960
Natimuk & District Progress Association Inc	\$ 1,910
Natimuk Brass Band	\$ 1,910
Total	\$21,220

3. Approve \$1000 to the following community grant allocation (noting Councillor conflict of interest):

Applicant	Amount
Haven Bush Play Group	\$ 1,000
Total	\$1000

4. Approve \$200 to the following community grant allocation (noting Councillor conflict of interest):

Applicant	Amount
Horsham College - Alternate Pathways Achievement Award	\$ 200
Total	\$200

REPORT

Background

HRCC provides annual assistance to a range of community groups on a recurrent basis to support the activities of these groups within the municipality. These community donations are included in the Council Budget adopted each year and administration of the program is undertaken in accordance with the Community Donations Policy.

The key principle of that policy is that the donation supports recurrent operational aspects of organisations within our community that provide community facilities, services or recreational activities that benefit the health and wellbeing of residents of our municipality. The donations program supports Theme 1 of the 2021-2025 Council Plan to “*Develop the municipality as a diverse, inclusive and vibrant community*”. These contributions support various recreation reserves, halls, kindergartens, and service groups to assist them with their operations (in accordance with the eligible categories in Council’s Donations policy).

As part of the annual policy review process Council approved a revised Community Donations Policy on 28 January 2025 (**Appendix 9.4B**).

Discussion

As per the Community Donations Policy, the donations proposed have been allocated under the following categories:

A. Recreation Reserve – maintenance of grass playing surfaces

This is an annual cash donation to assist recreation reserve Committees of Management maintain the standard of watered grass playing surfaces for the benefit of wider community use. Donations are based on whether a recreation reserve maintains a watered grass playing surface for competition sport during summer and/or winter, for example, a reserve that is watered for both summer and winter competition will receive two allocations. A reserve that is watered for either summer or winter will receive one allocation. A smaller allocation is provided for recreation reserves with no competition sport or that have a non-watered grass playing surface.

B. Kindergartens (Council owned) – annual maintenance

Council provides a general maintenance allocation to all Council-owned kindergartens.

C. Public Halls – insurance

Council provides Industrial Special Risk (ISR) insurance for public halls. ISR insurance essentially provides property damage cover for buildings and (in cases where these have previously been nominated and accepted by Council) contents. In addition, Council also provides public liability cover for “casual” (and some designated “regular”) hirers of community halls, together with public liability insurance cover for the delegated activities of the HRCC Community Halls Community Asset Committee (noting that public liability is provided through the Crown, for any Crown Land Committees of Management).

The amount allocated for public halls and other community facilities is estimated to be \$33,400 for 2025-2026.

D. Charitable Retail Premises – refund of rate payments

In recognition of the outstanding community service work provided to our municipality, Council refunds payments for the general rate and municipal charge levied against eligible charitable premises. The total amount allocated of \$8,510 is an estimate of refunds to be paid in 2025/2026.

E. Sponsorship of Prizes

Council sponsors several annual awards to support the activities educational institutions.

F. Specific Other Donations

Council recognises the important role that certain not-for-profit organisations play within our community to enhance the physical, recreational and/or social attributes of our municipality, through an annual cash donation.

These donations are grouped in the areas of:

- Welfare and Community Services
- Community Newsletters
- Support of Community events

The financial allocation recommended for inclusion in the 2025-2026 budget is based on the 2024-2025 allocation noting revisions have since been made since that allocation. Specifically, Council endorsed the allocation of \$190,695 for community donations at their meeting on 27 May 2024. Since that allocation the donations have been reviewed with several of the financial contributions previously classified as 'donations' now more correctly classified as 'contributions'. This review resulted in a reduction in the allocation for donations from \$190,695 to 164,085 with the remaining \$26,610 allocated as per the Council resolution but noting the items are now considered contributions rather than donations. Further review of the donations will occur once the 2025-2029 Council Plan is adopted and include recommendations for program revisions if/where required to ensure the program aligns with the objectives of the new Council Plan.

It is proposed that the 2025-2026 budget allocation remain as per the 2024-2025 allocation noting the redefinition of \$26,610 worth of donations as contributions. These contributions are now addressed separately and will form part of the adopted 2025-2026 budget.

Options to Consider

1. That Council endorse the allocation of donations for inclusion in the 2025-2026 budget (**Appendix 9.4A**).
2. That Council determine to vary the amount allocated for donations. Option 1 is recommended as it is consistent with Council's approved Donations Policy.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

Not applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Although reviewed annually, a comprehensive review of the Community Donations Policy and Program will occur once the 2025-2029 Council Plan is adopted. The review will include recommendations for program revisions if/where required to ensure the program aligns with the objectives of the new Council Plan.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

The total donation allocations of \$164,085 is included in Council's 2025-2026 Budget.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

- HRCC Community Donations Policy
- HRCC Council Plan (2021-2025)

Risk Implications

The Community Donations Policy is reviewed annually and the funding allocation for donations is formally approved as part of the annual budget process.

Conclusion

The 2025-2026 Community Donations will provide over \$160,000 of annual assistance to a range of community groups to support the activities of these groups within the municipality.

9.5 2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Directorate:	Director Corporate Services
File Number:	F06/A13/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Horsham Rural City Council 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Report (**Appendix 9.5A**)
Horsham Rural City Council 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Tailored Question (**Appendix 9.5B**)

Purpose

To receive and note the results of the 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.

Summary

- The main objective of the survey is to assess the performance of Council across a range of measures, and to seek insight into ways to provide improved or more effective service delivery.
- The survey provides insight into the community's views on:
 - HRCC's overall performance, with benchmarking against State-wide and council group results
 - value for money in services and infrastructure
 - community consultation and engagement
 - decisions made in the interest of the community
 - customer service, local infrastructure, facilities, services and
 - overall council direction.
- Results have improved from the 2024 results across all areas however overall council performance remains below the state-wide and regional cities averages.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Horsham Rural City Council 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey results.

REPORT

Background

Horsham Rural City Council has once again participated in the Local Government's annual community satisfaction survey conducted by JWS Research. The survey is now in its twenty-sixth year and is coordinated by the Department of Government Services (DGS) on behalf of Victorian Councils.

The 2025 report represents a return to the annual survey following three years where the HRCC survey was conducted on a quarterly basis. A total of 400 residents and ratepayers completed the survey during the period from 28 January 2025 to 16 March 2025, randomly selected for phone interview.

The survey is conducted by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), which is a representative random probability survey of residents aged 18+ years and seeks to target the surveys to the gender and age profile of the community. The Survey sample matched the demographic profile of HRCC. The survey is undertaken from publicly available phone records, including up to 44% mobile phone numbers, to cater to the diversity of residents in the Council, particularly young people.

The survey compiles community feedback on councils in five key performance areas and includes comparisons to Council's results in previous years. A comparison at the state-wide and regional level noting Horsham has been classified as a Regional Centre council according to the classification list of Metropolitan, Interface, Regional Centres, Large Rural & Small Rural. The Regional Centres group includes Ballarat, Greater Bendigo, Greater Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

The main objective of the survey is to assess the performance of Council across a range of measures, and to seek insight into ways to provide improved or more effective service delivery. Wherever appropriate, results for Horsham Rural City Council for the 2025 State-wide Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey have been compared against other participating councils classified as a Regional Centres group, and on a state-wide basis.

Discussion

Perceptions of Horsham Rural City Council's overall performance, customer service, and overall direction improved significantly in the last 12 months with an overall performance index score of 48 for HRCC representing a five-point increase on the 2024 result. While perceptions of Council's overall performance are starting to rebound, HRCC is still rated significantly lower (statistically at the 95% confidence interval) than both the Regional Centres group and State-wide averages (index scores of 54 and 53 respectively).

The significant improvement is demonstrated in Figures 1 (2024 and 2025 comparison) and 2 (trends over time). Most notably the perceptions of Horsham Rural City Council's overall council direction having risen from a score of 37 in 2024 to 61 in 2025. This is the highest rating ever recorded for this measure and a strong result for Council, especially considering the lowest rating for overall direction was recorded only two years ago (34 in 2023). Council is now rated significantly higher than both the State-wide and Regional Centres group averages (index scores of 46 and 48 respectively).

Of note are the results as compared to Regional Centres group and State-wide averages. For example, Council performs significantly higher than the Regional Centres group and State-wide averages on overall direction while for customer service, Council performs significantly higher than the State-wide average and in-line with councils in the Regional Centres group. HRCC however scores significantly lower than both groups on overall performance and value for money. In all five individual service areas evaluated, Council rates in-line with the Regional Centres group and State-wide averages.

Figure 1: Summary of HRCC Performance against core measures










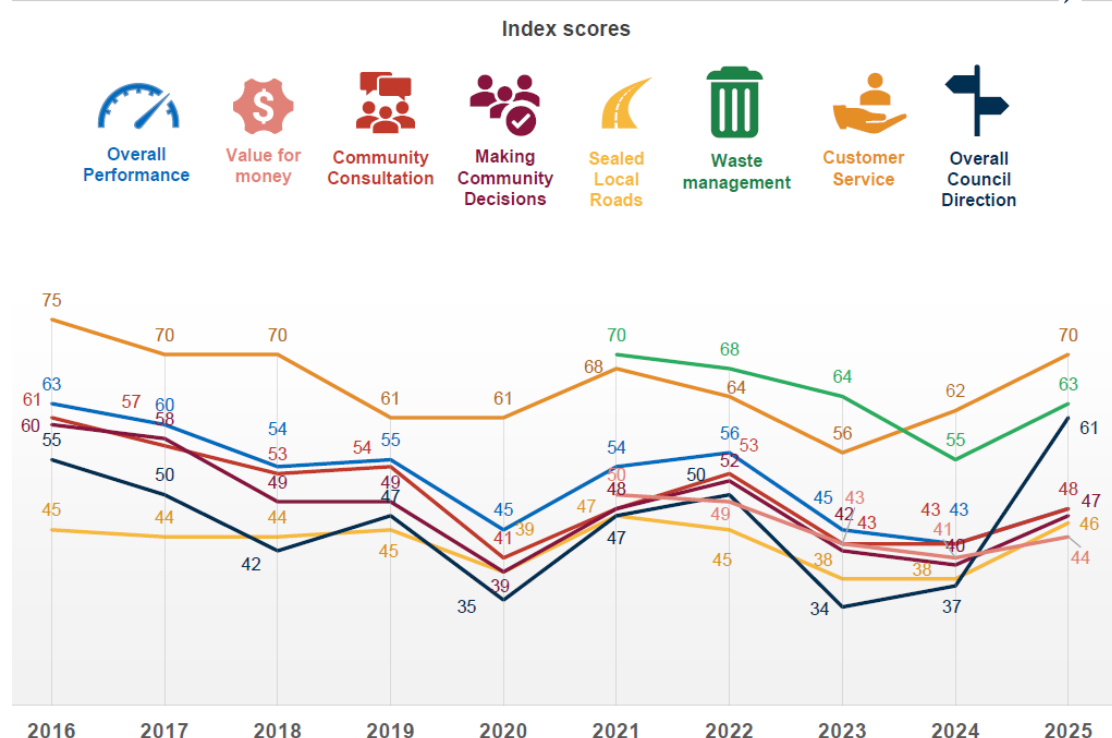
Services	Horsham 2025	Horsham 2024	Regional Centres 2025	State-wide 2025	Highest score	Lowest score
 Overall performance	48	43	54	53	18-34 years	35-49 years
 Value for money	44	41	47	47	18-34 years	35-49 years
 Overall council direction	61	37	48	46	65+ years	50-64 years
 Customer service	70	62	68	66	18-34 years	35-49 years
 Waste management	63	55	65	65	65+ years	Rural Area residents
 Consultation & engagement	48	43	49	50	18-34 years	35-49 years
 Community decisions	47	40	48	49	18-34 years, 65+ years	35-49 years
 Sealed local roads	46	38	46	45	18-34 years	35-49 years
 Unsealed roads	36	33	39	38	18-34 years	35-49 years, Rural Area residents

Figure 2: Summary of HRCC core measures over time



Improved performance in most areas means Council is showing signs of recovery from record or near record low ratings over the past two years. Council should therefore seek to maintain and build upon these gains. However, there is substantial scope for improvement noting there is still dissatisfaction in relation to unsealed roads even considering the minor improvement in the index score. The focus area summary provided in the HRCC report (**Appendix 9.5A**) states:

Unsealed roads, for example, remains Council's lowest-performing area, with little improvement since measurement began in 2024 (index score of 36 in 2025, up slightly – but not significantly – from 33). Increased attention in this area is warranted over the next 12 months to improve perceptions.

There is also a difference in perception among the community with residents aged 34 to 49 years and those in the Rural Area the most critical of Council's performance across many areas (despite some significant gains among Rural Area residents this year). The report recommends targeted efforts toward these groups over the next 12 months noting these groups rate community decisions and Council's consultation and engagement efforts the lowest, indicating potential opportunity for some targeted activities to ensure they feel heard on local issues.

Options to Consider

Most Victorian Councils participate in the Community Satisfaction Survey which enables meaningful comparisons to be made with other Regional Centres and state-wide trends and results more generally. In 2025, there were 56 of 79 Councils throughout Victoria who participated in the survey (down from 62 in 2024). Council could elect to do its own separate survey, however the value of being compared to other groups of councils within the standard questions would be lost.

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable.

Community Engagement

The summary report is provided as an attachment to this report and will be placed on Council's website after Council has formally received it. The report represents feedback from some 400 community members who participated in the survey.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Council uses the results from the survey to determine areas of focus or priority as part of its commitment to continuous improvement.

Financial Implications

The cost of participation in the survey forms part of the annual Council Budget.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey is a collaborative survey coordinated and conducted by JWS Research under the guidance of Local Government Victoria.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan: Theme 4– Strategies

4.1 Continuously improve communication and engagement with the community through effective consultation

4.4 Achieve high standards of organisational performance

Risk Implications

While the results indicate an improvement across all areas for 2025, the results are still below the state-wide and regional averages. There remains a risk to Council if the performance in some areas is not addressed to improve performance against the state-wide and regional averages.

Conclusion

The Horsham Rural City Council 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey has been completed and the survey report and response to the tailored question on sealed roads is presented to the Council for noting.

9.6 DRAFT VICTORIAN TRANSMISSION PLAN

Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Directorate:	Communities & Place
File Number:	F24/A14/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☒ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Horsham Rural City Council Submission to Draft Victorian Transmission Plan (May 2025) (**Appendix 9.6A**)

Purpose

To update Council on the preparation of the draft Victorian Transmission Plan (May 2025) and seek Council endorsement of the draft submission.

Summary

- VicGrid, the Victorian State Government agency responsible for planning and development of the State's electricity transmission infrastructure, has prepared the draft Victorian Transmission Plan, May 2025 (**Draft VTP**). It is a long-term plan for renewable energy infrastructure.
- 7 Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) and 7 Priority Transmission Projects are identified across the State required to support the transition to renewable energy. The Wimmera Southern Mallee REZ has been designated across the northernmost part of the municipality. The main transmission line is also required as a priority project (North West Strengthening Program).
- Future project approvals will be the responsibility of State Government, not Council.
- Feedback is being sought on the draft VTP until 24 June 2025. A draft submission has been prepared that acknowledges the plan and calls for the VTP to (in high level summary):
 - Better recognise the value of agricultural land quality and ensure it protects productivity.
 - Develop an approvals pathway that prioritises social cohesion and is transparent, equitable, genuinely engages with affected communities and ensures Councils are equitably resourced to participate.
 - Develop a genuine community benefits model that supports and delivers sustainable long-term structural development of our economy.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Acknowledge the preparation of the draft Victorian Transmission Plan for public engagement; and
2. Endorse the draft submission (**Appendix 9.6A**) as Council's formal response to the draft plan to be submitted to VicGrid.

REPORT

Background

The reason for this report is because the State Government has released the draft Victorian Transmission Plan (**Draft VTP**) on 16 May 2025 and is now seeking feedback on it until Tuesday 24 June 2025.

The Draft VTP is publicly available: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan>

VicGrid is the State Government agency responsible for coordinating the planning and development of the Victoria's electricity transmission network. It has prepared the draft VTP under the requirements of the National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005 (NEVA) to guide the planning and development of renewable energy infrastructure over the next fifteen years and beyond.

Draft renewable energy zones and priority transmission projects

The release of the draft VTP establishes the release of seven (7) Renewable Energy Zones (**REZs**) across Victoria – considered the most suitable areas to host renewable energy (wind, solar & battery storage). It also identifies the seven (7) 'priority transmission programs' and investments required in transmission required to 'strengthen and modernise' Victoria's grid.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee REZ includes land inside the HRCC boundaries. The Grampians Wimmera REZ is located just beyond Council's eastern boundary in the Northern Grampians and Yarriambiack municipalities. These are shown in **Figure 1** below. This is part of a concentration of six of the seven REZs in Victoria's north-west and western regions.

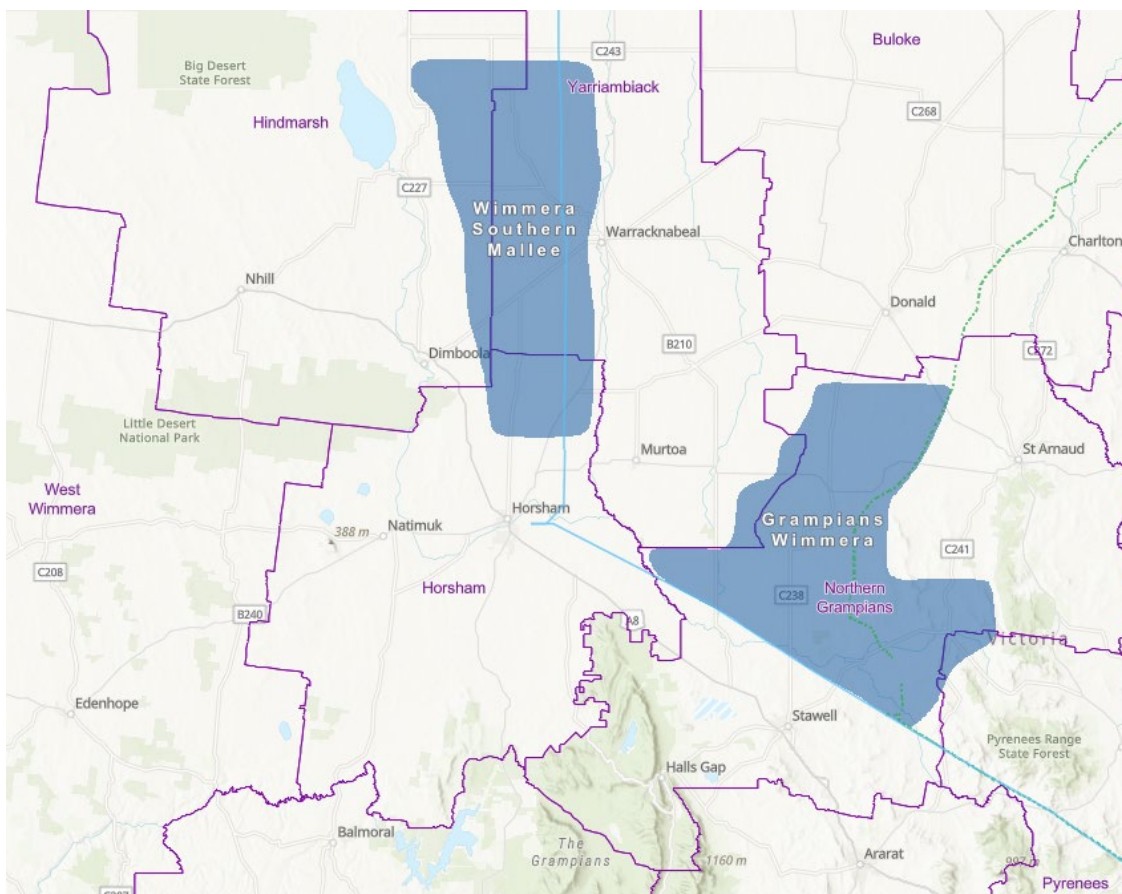


FIGURE 1 LOCATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONES AND MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES. BLUE LINE IS THE EXISTING TRANSMISSION LINE CORRIDOR.

The key transmission grid project affecting Horsham and the region is the 'North West Strengthening Program,' which aims to significantly increase capacity through works that include replacement of single circuit transmission lines with new high-capacity double circuit lines (by 2035). This will be subject to separate future approvals (see also **Figure 1** for existing alignment).

Landowners, neighbours & compensation

The draft VTP highlights that landowners have the right to say no to future proposals put forward by the energy market (this does not apply to the transmission priority projects where corridors will be negotiated or easement rights or land acquired by the State). Payments for host landowners (including \$8,000 per kilometre of typical transmission easement – over 25 years) and potentially impacted neighbours are part of future planning outlined by the draft VTP.

Preparation of the draft VTP

Preparation of the Draft VTP commenced in November 2023 and has included community renewable energy planning survey and mapping (November 2023 to February 2024), community workshops (May to June 2024), draft Transmission Plan Guidelines & consultation (July 2024) and the release of public consultation reports in late 2024. HRCC been engaged during these phases by VicGrid. All background documents can be accessed via the following link:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/project/victransmissionplan/page/document-library>

Discussion

Council's draft submission (**Appendix 9.6A**) acknowledges the reasons and value for preparing the VTP. The designation of REZs will provide clarity about where future renewable energy projects will be located and the infrastructure needed to improve the overall grid network.

What is less clear from the Draft VTP is how aspects of it have been prepared. For example, data sources that contributed to the consideration of agricultural land quality and productivity were not released. It also doesn't outline how future approval pathways (for new projects) and community funding mechanisms might work in sufficient detail.

It is becoming increasingly typical of Ministerial land use and development decision-making processes to marginalise community input and build in exemptions that remove rights to review (appeal) decisions (e.g. VCAT). Council's submission highlights that it is Councils who are often required to manage the on-ground impacts of Ministerial approvals. This necessitates genuine input and resourcing to be a key part of supporting implementation of the plan to avoid unforeseen local impacts. Maintaining cohesion within our impacted communities should be prioritised when there is potential for proposals to be divisive.

Accordingly, Council's draft submission identifies three key issues that it is considered need to be further addressed, which are summarised here (please refer **Appendix 9.6A** for full context and discussion of each):

- 1) **Agricultural productivity:** The submission identifies that a more transparent and consistent statewide approach for identifying, mapping (including release of data) and protecting the most valuable and productive agricultural land is required and ensuring that any future renewable energy projects carefully consider the long-term impacts.
- 2) **Approvals, engagement, social cohesion & conflict resolution** – seeks future approvals pathways that are more transparent and allow genuine engagement. Social cohesion must be prioritised by VicGrid to avoid proposals creating divisions and affecting the social and economic fabric of agricultural communities and productivity. Councils must be empowered to be engaged and participate in future approvals processes equitably to represent their communities. The State must include adequate resourcing capacity (time, skills, expertise and funding) to support this.

- 3) **Economic development:** ensuring the future design of the Community Energy Funding model delivers investment and benefits back into the region and ensures a significant amount of funds generated from energy transition are returned to impacted municipalities to assist economic growth.

Options to Consider

A submission is optional. Council can decide it does not want to make a submission to this process. It is recommended that a submission is made to ensure Council continues to have its views considered by this process.

Sustainability Implications

The draft VTP highlights the commitment for the State to transition to more sustainable renewable energy sources. It is unclear yet how this might yet benefit local communities in practice.

Community Engagement

The Plan is being prepared by VicGrid on behalf of the State Government. It is undertaking community engagement during the period 16 May to 24 June 2025. Community members must make submissions to VicGrid directly and not Council. Council is a stakeholder in the process. The consultation period does not allow sufficient time for Council to undertake its own engagement (e.g. to gauge community position) to inform the draft submission.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable.

Collaboration

Not applicable.

Financial Implications

Depending on the future impacts of State Government decisions, implementation of the draft VTP might have future resourcing implications on Council to participate and engage in future (yet unknown) approvals processes associated to renewable energy projects/ infrastructure.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The report relates specifically to the release of the draft VTP, the State Government's plan for renewable energy planning and transmission. Other plans and strategies of relevance are:

- Victoria's Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030
- Victoria's 2035 Emissions Reduction Target: Driving Real Climate Action

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

This report aligns with the following Council Plan Theme and all of its strategies:

- 2021-2025 Council Plan: Theme 3 Sustainability

This report also aligns with Investment Theme 2 (Renewable Energy and Sustainability) from 'Destination Horsham – Investment Attraction Strategy & Implementation Plan' (2022 onwards).

Risk Implications

Council's draft submission highlights that Council is not the decision maker for any future approvals processes. This could lead to outcomes where Council needs to manage the on-ground outcome(s) of Ministerial approvals, such as community discourse or construction impacts. Other risks to Council are resourcing of future involvement (staff skills, time, expertise and budget) to engage equitably in any approvals process or to address potential conflict resolution. The draft submission makes recommendations to address this.

Conclusion

The Draft VTP is a reasonable approach to plan for transition toward more future renewable energy. It provides direction, via the identification of the REZs, where proposals might be hosted and what landowners will be affected.

The draft submission at **Appendix 9.6A** has been prepared in response to the VTP. It identifies three key issues (see heading 'Discussions') and recommends responses to help improve the preparation and implementation of the final VTP. Council's submission is focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for our communities as we transition toward more sustainable energy provision in Victoria.

9.7 PA2400811 95A MCPHERSON STREET, HORSHAM – DEVELOPMENT OF A FREESTANDING, DIGITAL, MAJOR PROMOTION SIGN

Director:	Kevin OBrien
Directorate:	Communities and Place
File Number:	F24/A02/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Planning Permit application (**Appendix 9.7A**)

Delegate Report (**Appendix 9.7B**)

Landscaping proposal (**Appendix 9.7C**)

Purpose

To determine a planning permit application for the development of a Major Promotional Sign at 95A McPherson Street, Horsham.

Summary

The planning permit application proposes the development of a freestanding digital Major Promotional Sign at 95a Mcpherson St, Horsham. The application was received by Council on 20 December 2024 (**Appendix 9.7A**).

A full planning assessment against the Horsham Planning Scheme considering the relevant policy, objections and views of the referral authorities has been undertaken, indicating an assessment of environmental and amenity considerations and community benefit of the proposal.

The assessment is in accordance with Section 60 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* which specifies the matters which a responsible authority must consider in deciding an application.

Recommendation

That Council, being the responsible authority under the Horsham Planning Scheme and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and having considered the application, referral responses, the objections and the relevant provisions of the Horsham Planning Scheme, decides to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit for the development of a Major Promotional Sign at 95A McPherson Street, Horsham in accordance with the recommendation for approval contained in the delegate report (**Appendix 9.7B**).

REPORT

Background

The subject site is located at 95a McPherson Street, Horsham, positioned along the Western Highway, which serves as the principal transport route connecting Melbourne and Adelaide and is more particularly described as Crown Allotment 27 PP5386 Township and Parish of Horsham.

The land is located within the Horsham Showground precinct and lies adjacent to key facilities, including the Horsham Greyhound Racing Track and land associated with the Horsham Agricultural Society.

To the west of the site, is McPherson Street. The surrounding land is predominantly zoned for commercial use, comprising of a variety of businesses, which contribute to the active frontage along the entry corridor into Horsham.



Figure 1. Aerial image

The land is located within the Special Use Zone and a Major Promotional Sign is subject to a planning permit application and must meet the requirements of the Horsham Planning Scheme.

Refer to the delegate report (**Appendix 9.7C**) for a full description of the proposed Major Promotion Sign and assessment against the requirements of the Horsham Planning Scheme and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Discussion

As outlined in the Delegate Report, the application must be assessed against the relevant objectives, strategies, and decision guidelines of the Horsham Planning Scheme, including consideration of any objections received.

The proposal has been assessed against the relevant requirements of the Horsham Planning Scheme, and the development of major promotion sign meets the requirements and decision guidelines of Clause 37.01 (Special Use Zone); Clause 44.04 (Land Subject to Inundation Overlay); Clause 52.05 (Signs) and Clause 65.

In addition to this, the City to River Masterplan and Vision, which sets out the strategic framework for the Horsham Central Activity District and the Wimmer Riverfront, has also been considered as part of the assessment.

The assessment raised key issues regarding commercial activity, road safety, visual impact, and community benefit.

The proposed Major Promotional Sign complies with the intent of the purpose of the Special Use Zone and enhances the commercial function of the Horsham Showgrounds precinct.

The sign is well located in a position which minimizes impact on the surrounding natural environment and proposes to integrate sympathetically with the existing commercial activity already occurring within the precinct.

The applicant has also agreed to significant concessions through the planning process, to limit the hours of operation to 6 am to 9 pm, to allow for 1-10 community messaging spots which can be amended every three months and through making a financial contribution to the Wimmera River corridor committee.

On the basis of integrated decision making and community benefit the proposal meets the requirements of the Horsham Planning Scheme.

Options to Consider

Option 1 – Resolve to Issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit

This option is recommended by officers as it is considered that the proposal is consistent with the relevant controls, objectives and policies of the Horsham Planning Scheme. By issuing a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit it will provide objectors with the opportunity to seek a review of the decision at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

Option 2 – Refuse the application

On the grounds that it does not comply with the Horsham Planning Scheme provisions and will result in an unacceptable impact on the adjoining land uses in the area.

This option is not recommended by officers; by refusing the application it will provide the applicant with the opportunity to seek a review of the decision at VCAT.

Option 3 – Defer a decision on the application

This option is not recommended by officers as it is considered that all required information is available to form a position on the application. Deferring a decision will allow the applicant to apply to VCAT under

Section 79 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 for failure to determine an applicant within the prescribed timeframe.

Sustainability Implications

The proposal is consistent with sustainability principles and is designed to minimise impacts on the surrounding natural environments, visual amenity and does not propose impacts on walkability within the precinct.

Community Engagement

As a requirement under Section 52 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, notice of the application was given to adjoining landowners and occupiers. Following the notification period, ten (10) submissions were received objecting to the proposal.

A mediation meeting was held at the Council offices on Wednesday, 3 April 2025 between Council, the applicant, and objectors.

Following the mediation meeting, the objectors were provided with a landscaping proposal (**Appendix 9.7C**). In addition to this, a draft set of conditions were circulated to all objectors, which included conditions around landscaping, hours of operation and community messaging. All objectors were provided with the opportunity to withdraw their submissions on the basis that the additional information satisfied their concerns.

Council has received confirmation of five objection withdrawals, two following the mediation meeting and another three following the provision of the landscaping proposal and draft permit conditions.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable.

Collaboration

This report has been prepared in collaboration with Council officers within the Statutory Planning department and has sought the advice of referral authorities including the Department of Transport and Planning and the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.

Financial Implications

The decision on the application is unlikely to have any financial implications on Council beyond defending Council's decision should an application for review be lodged with VCAT.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The delegate report provides an assessment against the relevant plans and policies.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan - Theme 1 – Community - Theme 2 – Liveability – Theme 3 – Sustainability

Risk Implications

The proposal raises concerns within the community in relation to traffic hazards, amenity and impacts on environmental values. Council may have its decision overturned if an appeal is lodged with VCAT.

Conclusion

Planning Permit PA2400811 has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the Horsham Planning Scheme and Council acting as the Responsible Authority is requested to decide on the application in accordance with the recommendation for approval contained in the delegate report.

The proposal is consistent with the economic and commercial activation goals identified in the City to River Masterplan, with the major promotion sign proposing to introduce an element of commercial activity aligning with the purpose of the Special Use Zone purpose.

Before deciding on an application or approval of a plan, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- *The matters set out in section 60 of the Act*
- *Any significant effects the environment, including the contamination of land, may have on the use or development*
- *The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework*
- *The purpose of the zone, overlay, or other provision*
- *Any matter required to be considered in the zone, overlay, or other provision*
- *The orderly planning of the area*
- *The effect on the environment, human health, and amenity of the area*
- *The proximity of the land to any public land*
- *Factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality*
- *Whether the proposed development is designed to maintain or improve the quality of stormwater within and exiting the site*
- *The extent and character of native vegetation and the likelihood of its destruction*
- *Whether native vegetation is to be or can be protected, planted, or allowed to regenerate*
- *The degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development, or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard*
- *The adequacy of loading and unloading facilities and any associated amenity, traffic flow and road safety impacts.*

9.8 WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE DEVELOPMENT MEMBERSHIP

Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Directorate:	Communities & Place
File Number:	F19/A10/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Wimmera Southern Mallee Development 2023-2027 Strategic Plan (**Appendix 9.8A**)

Wimmera Development Association Memorandum of Understanding (**Appendix 9.8B**)

Purpose

To evaluate the strategic alignment and performance of Wimmera Southern Mallee Development to determine a reasonable membership contribution.

Summary

- Wimmera Southern Mallee Development (formally Wimmera Development Association) currently holds a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with five Councils across the region including Horsham Rural City Council.
- The core role of Wimmera Southern Mallee Development (WSM Development) is to build on the existing social, economic and environmental capacity of the region.
- The MOU with Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) is due to end on June 30, 2026.
- The MOU states that written notice must be given twelve months in advance of ceasing membership should a Council wish to withdraw from the MOU.
- This report provides an evaluation of WSM Development, examining its strategic framework, operational effectiveness, and overall impact on the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Decreases its annual contribution to Wimmera Southern Mallee Development to \$150,000, contingent on Wimmera Southern Mallee Development delivering key priorities of Council as follows: Development of Agriculture sector, Workforce Development, Regional Development, Regional Leadership, Drought Resilience and Telecommunications.
2. Requests that quarterly progress reports are provided by Wimmera Southern Mallee Development which outlines achievement of the priorities listed in 1 above.
3. Determine as to whether it continues its membership beyond the 2025-2026 financial year after assessing the performance of WSM Development over the coming 12 months and also considering whether the annual membership fee could be more effectively used within Council.

REPORT

Background

WSM Development was previously known as the Wimmera Development Association, undergoing a transformation in 2021-2022 to become an independent not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. This structural evolution indicates a strategic move towards a more formalised and professional governance model, designed to strengthen the organisation's capacity to deliver on its strategic plan (**Appendix 9.8A**) and enhance regional prosperity.

WSM Development works collaboratively with communities, various industries, and all levels of government, focusing on enabling growth, removing barriers, and building resilience and sustainability across the Wimmera Southern Mallee region. The foundational values of WSM Development—'innovative', 'supportive', and 'brave'—are explicitly stated as defining its people and culture, and guiding its approach to collaboration, leadership, advocacy, and the delivery of value for the region.

Discussion

WSM Development manages a diverse portfolio of programs and initiatives, each aligned with its overarching strategic plan to drive regional development. The organisation's capacity for both proactive strategic planning and agile, reactive response to unforeseen challenges is a notable strength. While the strategic plan outlines a forward-looking approach, many specific projects, such as those related to COVID-19 response, drought resilience, and family violence funding, demonstrate a robust ability to adapt and respond effectively to immediate and critical needs. This dual capacity for long-term vision and responsive action is crucial for maintaining regional stability and progress, positioning WSM Development as a resilient and effective partner for government and industry.

The following table summarises key programs, their objectives, and reported achievements:

Table 1: Key Programs, Objectives, and Reported Achievements

Program/Initiative	Stated Objective (from WSMD Strategic Plan/Website)	Key Activities/Projects	Reported Achievements/Outcomes
Agriculture	Develop the agricultural sector, including digital agriculture and food processing.	Influence growth of digital agriculture and food processing capabilities.	Increased regional food manufacturers/processing investment; WSM local food produce in 75% of supermarkets (2027 target).
Business & Industry	Support growth and development of businesses and industries.	-	-
Energy Shift	Facilitate transition to new energy	Engage consultants for landholder information on	Ongoing employment of over 300 FTE in renewable

	sources; advocate for renewable energy.	energy projects; advocate for renewable energy generation.	energy/minerals sector (2027 target).
By Five	Ensure every child has a safe, healthy, enriching start in life; equitable access to early years education.	Five trials across WSM; new training opportunities; allied health initiative with Royal Far West.	Improved early years services; increased confidence in local health professionals; trials successful until 2025.
Settlement Services	Support migrant/refugee settlement; contribute to population growth.	Provision of migrant youth activities; support for federal government settlement services.	Contributes to regional economic and cultural diversity.
Leadership Wimmera	Develop leaders; foster regional leadership and governance capacity.	Annual 'Changemaker's Program'; place-based development programs.	Developing leaders for over 20 years.
Murra Warra Wind Farm Community Grants Program	Provide grants to local not-for-profit groups.	2025 program open for applications.	Grants provided to local not-for-profit groups.
Housing	Address dire housing shortage, including fit-for-purpose housing.	Implementation of "Housing Blueprint 2022"; establishment of Wimmera Housing Innovations PTY (WHIP).	Over 1,000 new homes built by 2027 (target); WHIP facilitating 30% of housing commencements (target).
Drought Resilience	Address drought challenges; build community resilience.	'Hot property' – Resilient Housing Audit; 'Change Makers' Workshops.	Planning and delivery of drought resilience projects.
Workforce	Focus on workforce development; address labour shortages/skill needs.	Advocate for Workforce Retention, Attraction, and Development Coordinator.	Address labour supply challenges; increase employment in health roles.
Family Violence	Improve service delivery; increase	Co-design response with DHHS; purchase properties	Secured over \$1.3 million Victorian Government funding for emergency accommodation.

	access/quality of support.	for emergency accommodation.	
Telecommunications	Achieve high quality, reliable digital connectivity and services.	Advocate for new Mobile Blackspot towers; develop Digital Plan.	Six new Mobile Blackspot towers slated for construction.
Rural Councils Transformation Program	Encourage collaboration among local governments.	Successful application to Victorian Government program.	Received \$5 million for shared finance/payroll services; projected \$8 million productivity benefits.
Tourism Projects	Develop tourism and tourist facilities.	New Wimmera Mallee Tourism Destination Management Plan: Grampians region cycle brand advancement; Wimmera River Discovery Trail investment.	Continued work to develop tourism and tourist facilities.

Whilst the above table of programs and initiatives is extensive, there is an explicit absence of detailed stakeholder feedback, comprehensive community perception data, or extensive independent external reviews of WSM Development's performance.

While several government reports and regional assessments exist (e.g., from Regional Development Victoria and the Victorian Skills Authority), these primarily focus on regional economic and social conditions or the activities of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership, rather than direct evaluations of WSM Development's specific organisational performance or the outcomes of its programs from an external, unbiased perspective. The 2023-2024 Annual Report snippet also did not provide specific performance metrics for evaluation. This data gap presents a challenge for a truly independent and comprehensive evaluation of WSM Development's impact. While WSM Development's internal reports and strategic plans outline achievements and goals, the absence of independent third-party assessments or systematic community feedback mechanisms (beyond general consultation by the Regional Partnership) makes it challenging to fully gauge external perceptions of its effectiveness and accountability. This highlights an area for potential future development in WSM Development's transparency and external validation efforts.

There is also concern that a number of the projects and initiatives are taking place in smaller Shires, however the majority of WSM Developments funding is acquired from Horsham Rural City Council due to their regional population formula for calculating financial contributions from each member Council (**Appendix 9.8B**).

Options to Consider

1. Cease membership with WSM Development and reallocate the funds to an internal resource.
2. Negotiate the funding amount with WSM Development and continue membership with a reduced amount of funding allocated.
3. Continue membership with WSM Development at the current amount of funding stated in the MOU.

Option 2 is recommended as it would provide Council with value for money whilst ensuring Council's priorities that are to be delivered by WSM Development are achieved.

Sustainability Implications

WSM Development has a strategic goal of achieving financial self-sustainability by 2032, therefore the organisation should continue to actively explore and cultivate diverse funding streams beyond traditional government grants and local government funding. This could involve expanding commercial activities, attracting private investment, or developing philanthropic partnerships to build a more resilient and independent financial base.

Community Engagement

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The current MOU with WSM Development has been in place since 2022 and no previous evaluation has occurred. Council needs to continue to evaluate budget allocations to ensure we are funding external organisations that provide value to HRCC and the community.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

The proposed financial contribution from HRCC in 2025/26 is \$238,656 based on a population-based formula as detailed in the table below:

TABLE 1- FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION FROM MEMBER COUNCILS

Contributor	%Region	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
HRCC	48	\$228,231	\$231,654	\$235,129	\$238,656
WWSC	8	\$36,789	\$37,341	\$37,901	\$38,469
NGSC	20	\$95,632	\$97,066	\$98,522	\$100,000
HSC	10	\$49,030	\$49,765	\$50,512	\$51,270
YSC	14	\$64,395	\$65,361	\$66,341	\$67,336
TOTAL	100%				

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Not applicable

Risk Implications

There is a risk that WSM Development may not be sustainable without financial support from Horsham Rural City Council.

There is also a risk that other partnerships may be affected if Council discontinues membership with WSM Development such as Regional Development Victoria who have a strong relationship with WSM Development.

Conclusion

Council needs to ensure it is achieving value for its investment in WSM Development as member and that this aligns with council's priorities and is not duplicating efforts of other agencies or delivering in areas that are not appropriate.

9.9 COUNCIL'S POSITION ON THE EMERGENCY SERVICES AND VOLUNTEERS FUND

Director:	Gail Gatt
Directorate:	Office of CEO
File Number:	F27/A01/000002

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Correspondence from Loddon Shire Council (**Appendix 9.9A**)

Purpose

To state Council's position in relation to their opposition to the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF).

Summary

- Councillors have previously stated their individual opposition to the ESVF at the Council meeting on 26 May 2025
- Council has issued media releases outlining their concerns during May 2025 and have also hosted Shane Sali, Mayor of Greater Shepparton in his capacity as Drought Task Force member on a visit to the region on 4 and 5 June 2025
- Loddon Shire Council has written to Council seeking support to join them in collective advocacy against the ESVF
- Councillors are now seeking to formalise their collective opposition to the ESVF in a resolution of Council and encourage our community to join them

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Vehemently opposes the proposed introduction of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund in its current form, due to the significant, unfair and inequitable impacts it will have on the Shire's farming, commercial and industrial sectors.
2. Calls on the State Government to recognise the role that farmers and the agricultural sector plays in food security and acknowledge they, together with the business and industrial sector in rural areas, are the backbone of our nation.
3. Calls on the State Government to listen to our community and immediately repeal the implementation of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy (Bill).
4. As the Bill is awaiting Royal Assent, we call on Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC Governor of Victoria to exercise her reserve powers and not sign this bill (ESVF) into Law.

REPORT

Background

The Victorian State Government has announced the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) will be replaced by the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) effective 1 July 2025. All property owners will be required to contribute to the ESVF unless they are eligible for the Volunteer Rebate. Land previously in the Vacant category under FSPL will now be reallocated under the ESVF.

The ESVF will be calculated based on a fixed charge that varies by property type, and a variable charge based on property value. The formula that will be applied is: Levy = fixed charge + variable charge – concession (if eligible). Those eligible, need to apply for Volunteer Rebate after they receive their rates notice.

The ESVF will be used to fund 90% of Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)'s budget, and 95% of the Country Fire Authority (CFA)'s and Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)'s budgets.

In addition, the ESVF will fund up to 95% of the following annual budgets:

- Triple Zero Victoria.
- Emergency Management Victoria (including the State Control Centre) and responsibilities for emergency management within the Department of Justice and Community Safety (including Emergency Recovery Victoria).
- Forest Fire Management Victoria and its support functions within the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

As with the FSPL, the ESVF will continue to be collected through local councils and will appear on the rates notice.

Opposition to the ESVF has been extensive and widespread with thousands of CFA volunteers and farmers rallying on Parliament's steps, and many of the 79 Victorian councils publicly declaring their opposition to the levy.

Discussion

To date Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC) has acted by joining with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Regional Cities group to call for urgent reform in relation to the ESVF. In May, the Mayor and former CEO met with Local Government Minister Nick Staikos and Agricultural Minister Ros Spence to advocate for changes to the levy. HRCC Mayor has spoken publicly on the topic through a statement made at the 26 May 2025 Council meeting and other Councillors also spoke to the topic during agenda item 10: Councillor Reports and Acknowledgements. Cr Klowss and Cr Sluggett also joined thousands of farmers and CFA volunteers at the rally on the steps of Parliament on 20 May.

Councillors also hosted Cr Shane Sali, Mayor of Greater Shepparton on 4-5 June 2025 in his capacity as a Drought Task Force member, to meet with members of our farming community to talk through their concerns.

We are aware our community are also concerned noting over 60 Country Fire Authority volunteers attended the Council meeting on 26 May 2025. At that meeting Mayor Ian Ross said the levy would have a devastating impact on our community noting this is a significant burden, particularly for our rural residents and primary producers, who are already under immense pressure from rising costs and ongoing economic challenges.

Council acknowledges the Government's announcement that it will cap the ESVF levy at the 2024-2025 rate for all primary production properties across the state for 2025-2026, however it does not go far enough to help ease the burden the levy will have.

What we have heard from our community:

- *The levy will have a disproportionate financial impact on rural community*

As mentioned in our media and other statements to date, we know many primary producers are already under financial pressure whether due to the drought and other tough conditions including previous bushfires. Many have had to use cash reserves, overdrafts, and insurance payouts to rebuild fence lines, while also needing funds to feed livestock. This has forced decisions to sell stock with unpredictable returns, including breeding stock which causes emotional distress due to the years invested in genetic development.

The increase in costs associated with the levy will be felt by everyone in the community either directly through their own increases or indirectly through rent or pricing increases.

As outlined above, the introduction of the ESVF will have significant implications for the mental health of rural and regional communities.

- *Health and wellbeing*

Local services advise of farmers reporting feeling trapped by debt, family expectations, and isolation. They also note that farmers generally don't tend to reach out for mental health support as readily as other groups do, as they are a proud and resilient group of people.

Families also experience emotional and financial strain with partners and children also facing uncertainty and stress. Young people also report disrupted education and a lack of a future in farming.

It is clear the impact of drought extends beyond agriculture and affects the health and stability of rural communities.

While there are mental health services available within our community including: a free counselling service for all Wimmera residents; the 'Step Through Care' program which supports people across the mental health spectrum; and a rural outreach counselling service, these regional services have not received new or increased investment. There are also mental health services provided by Wimmera Base hospital however this is an acute not long-term option.

- *Uncertainty as to allocation of funds collected*

Millions will be extracted from communities into state revenue through the collection of the ESVF. To date there has been no assurance that the funds collected from rural and regional communities will be reinvested into local emergency services in those communities. Given many of the CFA volunteers currently servicing those rural and regional communities have already, or will shortly, hang up their uniforms in protest of the levy there is concern about the impact on local emergency services.

- *Financial risk to councils*

Like the former FSPL, the ESVF will be included on rates notices and be collected by councils. Councillors across the state are hearing from members of the community that they will pay their council rates but do not intend to pay the levy.

Council have modelled the potential impact for HRCC and if our ratepayers opt not to pay the levy in 2025-2026, there will be \$4,873,584.36 owed to council (noting we are the collection agency for the levy under legislation). If our ratepayers opt to pay the levy at the 2024-2025 rather than 2025-2026 rate, then there will be \$890,246.16 owed to council.

If that happens it will have a significant impact on council as the State Revenue Office will still collect the levy as a proportion of what is paid regardless of whether that payment was made just for rates. This places councils at financial risk, and in the undesirable position of recovering unpaid money from ratepayers.

Noting this impact many councils have called for the State Revenue Office to take over administration and collection of the ESVF to reduce the financial and administrative burden the collection of the levy places on councils.

HRCC advocacy

Now is the time for Council to resolve a position on the ESVF in addition to the advocacy already undertaken by the HRCC Mayor and Councillors. The recommendation presented in this report, if resolved by Council will provide clarity to HRCC's position on the levy. Loddon Shire Council have also written to the HRCC Mayor on 2 June 2025 (**Appendix 9.9A**) inviting HRCC to join them in the advocacy effort.

Community advocacy

An opportunity exists for community members to join the advocacy effort if they are concerned. A Legislative Council Petition requesting that the Legislative Council call on the Government to immediately cease the introduction of the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund is available online at <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/petitions/emergency-services-and-volunteers-fund/>

Options to Consider

Council can resolve not to make a formal resolution in opposition to the ESVF.

Sustainability Implications

Nil – refer financial

Community Engagement

Councillors have engaged with our community through various methods including attending a community rally and hosting Cr Shane Sali, Mayor of Greater Shepparton in his capacity as Drought Task Force member on a visit to the region on 4 and 5 June 2025.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Councils have engaged with other Councils, Regional Cities Victoria and MAV.

Financial Implications

There is a risk to council in relation to unpaid levy payments noting council are responsible for debt collection on behalf of the State and the State Revenue Office will take the levy as a proportion of what is paid. There are also increased administration costs.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Emergency Services Volunteer Fund

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Will affect all aspects of the Council Plan.

Risk Implications

There are significant risks to Council associated with both the ESVF and the collection of that levy as outlined in the report.

Conclusion

The Mayor and Councillors have individually and collectively commented on their views of the ESVF during the 26 May 2025 Council meeting. Advocacy to the Victorian Government by HRCC, to review the levy has taken place and this continues. Loddon Shire Council has also written to HRCC requesting we join with them and other Council's in opposition to the ESVF. This report proposes a recommendation for Council to consider, which if adopted, formalises Council's position in opposing the ESVF and seeks reconsideration of the legislative changes proposed.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

9.10 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND GROWTH DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Directorate:	Communities and Place
File Number:	F15/A06/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Quarterly Spendmapp Report (data is from bank card transactions and may not capture all Ag Industry)

Appendix 9.10A

Spending Insights March 2023 to March 2025 **Appendix 9.10B**

Purpose

To receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Department Quarterly Report for the period: February - April 2025.

Summary

The Investment Attraction and Growth Department Quarterly Report provides the progress and outcomes achieved through the delivery of the Investment Attraction Strategy and Implementation Plan during the reporting period.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Department Quarterly Report for the period February to April 2025.

REPORT

Background

An Investment Attraction and Growth Department Report is tabled Quarterly at a Meeting of Council.

Discussion

The work undertaken across Investment Attraction and Growth Department includes Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning, Building Services, Business Development and Tourism.

The Investment Attraction Strategy and Implementation Plan progress and key achievements for the months of February, March and April 2025 are articulated in the information and tables, as follow.

Actions are measured by goals and set timelines. The timelines are indicated by years which relate to financial years.

Year 1 - 2022-2023

Year 2 - 2023-2024

Year 3 - 2024-2025

Year 4 - 2024-2025

Year 5+ 2025+

Ongoing – life of plan

The teams will focus on delivering actions within the current financial year whilst carrying out the necessary planning to ensure targets are meet in sequential years.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Council Priorities	Action	Goal Measured by	Feb - Apr 25
2.1 (Ongoing)	Support Wimmera Southern Mallee Development to facilitate improved telecommunications, housing and workforce outcomes	- Government fund provided to improve telecommunications - Industry not reporting lack of housing availability for new employees to the region	Wimmera Southern Mallee Development are working collaboratively with renewable companies to ensure positive housing and workforce outcomes across all projects. A network has been created to ensure open communication lines between the projects.
2.10 (Ongoing)	Undertake regular meetings between Wimmera Southern Mallee Development and Investment Attraction Department to inform and discuss economic development opportunities	10 forums held per year	Meetings are held monthly. Outcomes relate to business development opportunities that benefit the region overall. 4/10 meetings held to date in 2025.
2.8.1		Planning Permit	

(2 years)	Support the Development of Mt Zero Resort		Planning Permit Issued in 2023. Construction subject to feasibility and private investment.
(2 years)	Prepare and implement the recommendations from the Aerodrome Masterplan	Aerodrome Masterplan development	The Airport Masterplan is currently on hold.
3.1.2 (3 years)	Seek investment for opportunities highlighted in the Wartook Valley Strategy	3 new tourism products developed	A satellite visitor information centre has been established at the Happy Wanderer Caravan Park. Council have provided brochure stands and brochures along with a teardrop banner with the blue and white.
5+years	Investigate opportunities for industries at the WAL Hub	One Industrial lot sold annually	Target reached in 2025
3.5 (2 years)	Advocate for mining in our region to meet world's best practice	MOU developed between Council and WIM Resource	MOU to be reviewed. Council has provided a submission relating to WIM Resource's mining license.
3.6 (1-2 years)	Council support and advocate for renewable energy projects of all scales	Begin discussions with smaller townships for community scale solar	Bi-monthly meetings between HRCC and SEC (Horsham Solar Farm) have been set up to ensure Council is up to date with progress.
(1-2 years)	Provide specific marketing information adaptable to Council's Website to encourage and support renewable energy developments	Website updated and investment prospectus developed	A dedicated webpage on the HRCC website is being regularly updated to include current information provided by mining and renewable companies.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Council Priorities	Action	Goal Measured by	Feb - Apr 25
2.1.2 (ongoing)	Design, promote, participate and support municipal activities and events as scheduled including NAIDOC, Volunteers, International Women's Day & Seniors Week	Events reported on in the Investment Attraction and Growth monthly Council Report	The Horsham Regfest Country Music Festival was held in March. This inaugural event at the City Oval Event Stage attracted approx 1200 attendees with over 80% of ticket holders being from outside the Horsham municipality.

Officers Reports

2.6.1 (ongoing)	Promote recreational activities in our natural environment to increase destination tourism and visitation	Activities reported on in the Investment Attraction and Growth monthly Council Report	Council contracted Aubrey and Areegra to create an entry in the Top Tiny Tourism Town for Natimuk. The entry includes a short video, itineraries and images of activities within Natimuk including rock climbing, walking and bird watching.
2.8.1 (ongoing)	Support the delivery of tourism opportunities on the Wimmera River, Mt Arapiles and lakes in our region	Tourism opportunities reported on in the Investment Attraction and Growth monthly Council Report	The Summer Series concluded in April with multiple events held throughout February and March with the final event in early April.
3.1.3 (2 years)	Develop and implement the Natimuk Social and Economic Plan and Dadswell's Bridge Community Action Plan	Plan Developed & Progress report to Council	Satellite visitor information centres have been established in Wartook, Dadswells Bridge and Natimuk. These are located at the Happy Wanderer Caravan Park, the Giant Koala and the Natimuk Post Office. Council have provided brochure stands and brochures along with a teardrop banner with the blue and white i.
3.2.1 (ongoing)	Work with local business leaders throughout the municipality to develop business confidence and growth	Two business forums held annually	Business Brunch partnered with WestVic Business to be held on Friday 9th May for young professionals in the area.
3.2.1 (ongoing)	Ensure constant communication through e-mails and business newsletters with tourism operators and local businesses regarding what is happening in the region	A minimum of 10 business newsletters distributed annually 4 business forums are held annually	Three newsletters were sent last quarter. They were sent to 1029 recipients and had a total of 1171 opens and 429 clicks
3.4.2 (ongoing)	Encourage homebased and start-up businesses to expand through the Wimmera Business Centre	Having two start-up businesses per year gain support through the WBC.	We had one start up business expand to a second room and a new commercial tenant rent the garage space that has been vacant for almost 3 years. This put the Business Centre at 100% capacity.
3.4.2 (ongoing)	Attract businesses to lease vacant shops in the Horsham city centre through the Wimmera Business Centre	Vacant shops reduced from 24 shops to 20 in the first year and maintained at or below 18 shops for the succeeding years	See below table

3.4.2 (ongoing)	Advocate for value-add opportunities with existing and future farmers through innovative practices such as smart farming practices, planting native perennial vegetation and implementing renewable energy sources on farms	Attend the Horsham Field Days to host conversations with farmers.	The Business Team attended the Wimmera Field Days in March to promote the Agritourism Toolkit that has been developed to assist agricultural operators to incorporate tourism into their businesses.
3.4.2 (ongoing)	To promote Live the Grampians Way to local businesses and engage with people who show an interest in moving to the region	Ensure every person who contacts Live the Grampians Way has received a welcome/information sheet and follow up phone call	Discussions have been held with the Grampians Shires around the feasibility of this program. It will be decided in the coming months whether to keep the Grampians Way website and allow access to the back end to each Shire so they can update their own patches.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM NEWS

Horsham Regfest



Horsham Regfest Country Music Festival was held in March and was the inaugural event for the City Oval Event Stage. The event attracted approximately 1200 attendees with more than 85% of patrons being from outside the region. Nine country music artists performed at the event which was headlined by Adam Brand. Feedback from the event organiser was extremely positive and they are looking forward to returning to Horsham in 2026.

Natimuk Top Tourism Town Award Submission



The Top Tourism Town Awards specifically recognise regional Victorian towns that excel in offering quality visitor experiences and are committed to boosting tourism to their regions. There are several categories available to enter and this year we have entered Natimuk in the Top Tiny Town category which is designed for towns with a population of under 1500 people.

SPENDMAPP

Quarterly Economic Snapshot Jan-Mar (**Appendix 9.10A**)

Spending Insights March 2023 to March 2025 (**Appendix 9.10B**)

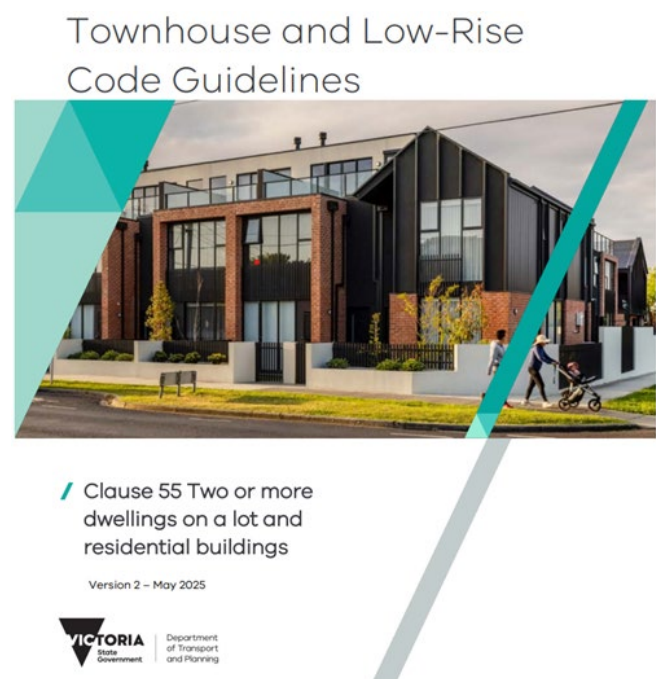
Occupied Businesses:

Street and Number of Businesses	January 2025 Businesses Occupied	April 2025 Businesses Occupied	April 2025 Businesses Vacant	April 2025 Percentage Businesses Occupied
Darlot St – 43 car wash and businesses operating from a house included	42	41	2	95%
Firebrace St - 97	88	88	9	90%
Hamilton St - 17	17	16	1	94%
Wilson St – 34	28	29	5	85%
Pynsent St – 28 Cinema included	27	27	1	96%
Roberts Ave – 27 Coles included	26	24	3	88%
McLachlan St – 24 CFA & GWM included	22	23	1	96%
Total 270 Post February 2022 there were 262 shops identified in the study area	250/272	248/270	22	92%

(Businesses are determined by whether they are 1. A premises, 2. Have customers 3. Exchange money; i.e Centre Link and the Cinema are included, and the Public Library is excluded). There are four known shops that are not suitable for occupancy as they require major renovations or are being used as a secondary business not requiring a retail front. These shops are reflected in the vacant shop numbers and unfortunately reduce the percentage of occupied businesses.

STATUTORY PLANNING

Planning Scheme – Residential Code Changes



Changes to the Residential Code for small lot and medium density housing were introduced into all planning schemes across Victoria in March 2025. They have been introduced to enable faster decisions and were developed to meet housing targets established in Plan for Victoria (2025). T

Deemed to comply operation: The standards to assess an application for two or more dwellings on a lot or residential buildings up to and including 3 storeys (Clause 55 in the Planning Scheme) have been updated and all not quantifiable metrics removed. That means a clearer and unambiguous group of standards are now in place.

Exemptions: When a standard is met, the responsible authority is no longer required to consider i) Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework; ii) Decision guidelines of the relevant zone and Clause 65; iii) Sections 60(1,1A,1B) and 84(B) of the Planning and Environment Act.

Public notice of application: No changes to the notice of application procedure, including notification to affected adjoining owners/occupiers. Any person is still able to submit an objection.

No rights to appeal: In a scenario where the application meets all the applicable standards, the Council must issue a planning permit, the application would be exempt from review by a third party (VCAT), and an objector would have no right to lodge an appeal.

If the application does not meet all the applicable standards, grounds of appeal of the non-deemed to comply standards would be considered, and an objector would have the right to lodge an appeal.

Link to an article from the Department of Transport and Planning:

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/news/articles/new-townhouse-and-low-rise-code>

Link to the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code Guidelines:

https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/744101/Townhouse-and-Low-Rise-Code-Guidelines-May-2025.pdf

Planning Applications Determined

Below are the number of Planning Permits issued for the months of **February to April 2025** and a comparison with the same period last year.

Type	FEB TO APR 2025		FEB TO APRIL 2024	
	No.	*Value \$	No.	*Value \$
Miscellaneous Domestic	1	34,000	11	4,846,940
Industrial/Commercial	12	6,910,916	8	3,880,647
Subdivisions	7 (68 lots)	-	4 (20 lots)	932,260
Other	-	-	-	-
Total	20	6,944,916		9,659,847

(*Please note: Not all applications have a \$ figure)

Total number of planning permits issued in the Horsham Rural City Council area from 1 July 2024 to 30 April 2025 is 63 compared to 68 in the same period in 2023-2024.

Planning permits issued for subdivision have permitted 100 new lots from 1 July 2024 to 30 April 2025 compared to 79 in the same period in 2023-2024.

Building Services

Below are the number of building permits issued for the months of **Feb to April 2025** and a comparison with the same period last year.

Permits issued by Horsham Rural City Council for this Municipality

Type	FEB TO APR 2025		FEB TO APR 2024	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	1	740,000	-	-
Alterations to Dwellings	1	15,987	-	-
Dwelling resittings	0	0	-	-
Misc Domestic (Carports, Garages etc)	5	69,260	1	53,786
Removal/Demolish	6	124,324	2	6,820
Industrial/Commercial	0	0	-	-
Signs	1	103,891	-	-
Total	14	1,053,462	3	60,606

Permits issued by other Private Building Surveyors for this Municipality or by Government Departments:

Type	2025		2024	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	11	6,675,696	20	10,198,689
Alterations to Dwellings	8	1,957,637	8	7,596,214
Dwelling resittings	-5	195,000	1	41,470
Misc Domestic (Carports, Garages etc)	23	880,931	23	1,457,268
Removal/Demolish	6	134,170	0	0
Industrial/Commercial	6	1,348,467	12	14,133,177
Signs		0	0	0
_Sub Total	55	11,191,901	64	33,426,818

A total of **35** Building Permits have been issued by the Horsham Rural City Council at a total value of **\$2,798,867** from **1 July 2024 to 30 April 2025** compared to **25** Building Permits at a total value of **\$3,980,788** in 2023-2024.

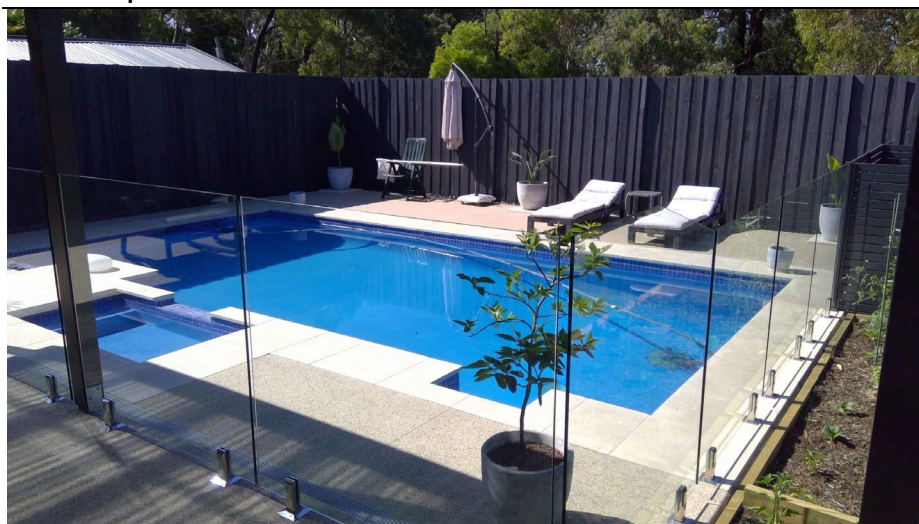
Private Building Surveyors have issued **170** Building Permits at a total value of **\$44,370,688** from **1 July 2024 to 30 April 2025** compared to **179** at a total value of **\$86,293,838** in 2023-2024.

Swimming Pool Inspections

In 2019 new laws were introduced to improve swimming pool and spa safety across Victoria. This included the registration and inspection of all pools and spas to ensure they meet the compliance standards for barriers.

Horsham Rural City have run a highly successful Swimming Pool compliance program over the past 5 years with over 767 Pools/Spas registered across the municipality and 98.9% inspected from 2021 to 2025.

This excellent compliant rate for the Horsham is reflective of the professional program run by the Horsham Rural City Building department and community who understand the importance of pool safety barriers.



An inspection is required every four years and council is currently contacting pool owners and encouraging them to book in a pool inspection with HRCC building team.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Council Priorities	Action	Goal Measured by	Feb - Apr 25
1.3.4	Develop an open space contribution rate(s) and a new local Public Open Space Contribution Policy.	Policy adopted by Council and Horsham Planning Scheme amended.	Open Space Strategy reviewed by SGS Economics completed. Amendment being further considered.
1.6.4 (2 years)	Implement the Horsham Heritage Study to protect buildings and places of historic cultural heritage to reinforce a 'sense of place' and celebrate Horsham's character and distinctiveness	Horsham Planning Scheme amended	Amendment documentation submitted to DTP for Authorisation and awaiting decision prior to Exhibition.
1.6.4 (4 years)	Prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the Horsham Cinema	Management plan endorsed by Council	Heritage Consultants preparing updated plan ready for stakeholder engagement.
2.10.2 (2 to 3 years)	Develop and implement a Housing Affordability and Diversity Strategy and complete an amendment to the planning scheme	Strategy developed and implemented through a planning scheme amendment	Draft Housing Strategy prepared for community consultation.
2.10.3 (2 years)	Prepare and implement the Horsham South Structure Plan (Stage 2)	Plan adopted by Council	Community Consultation on draft strategy completed and Engagement Summary prepared for Council briefing.
3.1.1 (2 to 4 years)	Prepare and implement a Commercial & Industrial Land Supply Strategy and include in the Planning Scheme	Plan developed & Strategy adopted by Council	Background report prepared for review by Project Control Group

Officers Reports

(2 years)	Complete a Planning Scheme Review as a vehicle for specifying desired outcomes across the municipality	Planning Scheme Review Completed and suggested changes implemented	Planning Scheme Review 2022 Amendment Documentation finalised. Currently under review as part of Strategic Planning Work Program.
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Options to Consider

Not applicable – no decision required

Sustainability Implications

Report provides overview of the development and business activity across the region with no direct sustainability implications.

Community Engagement

The report has been prepared in consultation with a range of agencies and will be made publicly available to Wimmera Southern Mallee Development (WSM), West Vic Business, and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism and on Council's website.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Report provides overview of activity and assists with continuous improvement.

Collaboration

Report has been prepared in collaboration with Council officers across Planning, Building and Business Development and Tourism Support.

Financial Implications

Nil

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable – no direct relationship or requirements

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan - Theme 3 - Sustainability - Horsham Rural City Council will actively lead in sustainable growth and development of the community and the economy.

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Strategy 2: A sustainable economy where local business, agriculture, tourism and other diverse industries thrive.

Destination Horsham Investment Attraction Strategy and Implementation Plan 2022 onwards

Risk Implications

Not applicable – no decision required

Conclusion

The Quarterly Investment Attraction and Growth Department report provides the opportunity to give Council and the community an insight into the projects being undertaken to grow our municipality and Horsham as a regional city.

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cr Ian Ross, Mayor

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
	Nil
Other Council Activities	
22/05/2025	Depot Staff Meeting- Introduction of Gail Gatt
22/05/2025	BGLC Local Government Forum
26/05/2025	Council Meeting
28/05/2025	National Reconciliation Week Walk & Community Lunch
29/05/2025	Horsham Hotel Development Presentation
29/05/2025	Community Engagement with Karina Dooley (Projectura)
30/05/2025	Rotary Club of Horsham Awards
2/06/2025	RCV Extraordinary Mayors meeting - Drought Response Taskforce advice
2/06/2025	Horsham RSL Committee- Cent Auction (fundraiser for the Wimmera Hospice Care Auxiliary and the Veterans Centre)
2/06/2025	Memorial Service for Keith Fischer
2/06/2025	Council Briefing
4/06/2025	Community Drought Group Dinner with Shane Sali
5/06/2025	Farm Tour with Shane Sali
8/06/2025	Official Celebration of Horsham Agricultural Society
8/06/2025	Smoke on the Water Event
10/06/2025	Council Briefing
11/06/2025	Meeting with Minister Lily D'Ambrosio

Cr Cam McDonald

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
27/05/2025	Wimmera Southern Mallee Development Association Board Meeting at Fed Uni
Other Council Activities	
5/05/2025	Laharum Rec reserve meeting with Laharum Football & Netball Club Meeting with John Walsh to discuss Arnott's Bore and Arnott's Road Issues Council Briefing
6/05/2025	Community listening post at Horsham West Primary School to hear community concerns surrounding traffic management and student safety concerns at pick up and drop off times.
7/05/2025	Farewell dinner for Craig Niemann
12/05/2025	Council Briefing Wesley presentation

13/05/2025	Council Briefing
26/05/2025	Council Meeting
27/05/2025	Strategic deep dive National Food Security session, council chambers
29/05/2025	Horsham hotel development presentation Community engagement with Katrina Dooley

Cr Dean O'Loughlin

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
	Nil
Other Council Activities	
26/05/2025	Council Meeting
2/06/2025	Council Briefing Meeting
10/06/2025	Council Briefing Meeting
16/06/2025	Special Council Meeting – City Oval Pavillion
16/06/2025	Council Briefing Meeting
17/06/2025	Farewell to The Art Is Festival – Official Opening

Cr Todd Wilson

Committee Representation	
Date	Description
	Nil
Other Council Activities	
29/05/2025	Horsham Hotel Presentation
29/05/2025	Council Plan session with Consultant
2/06/2025	Briefing

Councillor Reports and Acknowledgements

6/06/2025	Young Councillor Network Event in Melbourne
10/06/2025	Briefing
11/06/2025	Rotary Club of Horsham East Changeover Dinner
16/06/2025	Additional Meeting/Briefing
18/06/2025	Tour of the Showgrounds
18/06/2025	Citizenship Ceremony
18/06/2025	Meeting with Mr. Kingshott

11. URGENT BUSINESS

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS

- Council Briefing Meetings held on 2, 10 and 16 June 2025

Refer to **Appendix 13.1A**

13.2 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

Nil

13.3 INWARD CORRESPONDENCE

Nil

13.4 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Natimuk Economic & Social Plan Project Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 June 2025

Refer to **Appendix 13.4A**

Recommendation

That Council receive and note agenda items:

- 13.1 Informal Meetings of Councillors – Record of Meetings
- 13.2 Sealing of Documents
- 13.3 Inward Correspondence
- 13.4 Council Committee Minutes.

14. NOTICE OF MOTION